

Do Not Despise These Small Beginnings
by Dr. R.A. Weigel

Zechariah 4:10a (NLT) - Do not despise these small beginnings, for the LORD rejoices to see the work begin.

Nobody said that becoming an entrepreneur or starting your own business was going to be easy. The generally accepted statistics state that 10% of new businesses fail in the first year, 20% fail within two years, 45% within five years, and 65% within ten years. Less than 25% of new businesses survive beyond 15 years. But, if you followed the statistics, David would never have become a king, Esther would not have become a queen, Jonah would have remained as fish food, Joseph would have never saved Egypt, and Paul would never write the majority of the New Testament. God exists outside of worldly statistics. When you have a godly vision for your future, then the statistics are definitely in your favor.

What are the statistical chances that Peter would have walked on water? Using the world's logic, I'd say his chances were nonexistent. But when Jesus told him to "get out of the boat," Peter took that challenge and despite the statistics, he walked on water! Now...how about you? When the storms of your new business, your vision, or your direction crash around you and Jesus tells you to "come," will you become a water walker or sit in the boat complaining about the storm?

God promised to meet your needs, (Philippians 4:19), but perhaps there's a problem with our understanding of that. Often we think about what we need – only from a materialistic perspective. We say we need more money, more clients, or more things. Yet, over my many years, I've found that most people don't really know what they need. Perhaps what you really need is something that comes with a challenge, an idea, a vision, or an entrepreneurial adventure that will push you to grow spiritually. Perhaps your greatest need is to become the person who feels confident that when you're standing in front of Jesus at the end of time he will say to you, "Well done, good and faithful servant!" (Matthew 25:23) Your needs are unique to you so you may want to stop allowing the world's twisted priorities to tell you what you really need.

Your work today, no matter where you are on your entrepreneurial journey, is supposed to be another step in the right direction. It's fairly safe to say that nobody is going to find your new venture something they want to invest several million dollars. It's more likely that you're going to struggle to learn what has to be learned, apply that learning, and put the structures in place to make your new venture successful. But again, the odds ARE in your favor. Why? Because at all times, you and Christ make a majority.

In his book, *Chase the Lion*, Mark Batterson says, "The cure for the fear of failure isn't success. The cure for the fear of failure is failure in small enough doses that we build up an immunity to it." I like that idea a great deal. I've never known anyone who reached high levels of success who did not have some failures along the way. So, if you look at every experience as another opportunity to trust God while also looking for what he wants you to learn, then eventually you're going to find you've reached a level of success and contribution that goes beyond what you had in mind from the start.

Now... let's address some practical advice about your entrepreneurial adventure or vision. There are some basic reasons why most new ventures fail and here is a short list of some practical

considerations. You might label them as “counting the cost” and that is, of course, something that the Lord expects you to do.

- *Luke 14:28-29 (NLT) - **But don't begin until you count the cost.** For who would begin construction of a building without first calculating the cost to see if there is enough money to finish it? Otherwise, you might complete only the foundation before running out of money, and then everyone would laugh at you*

Entrepreneurial Considerations

1. What is the funding you need or price you pay for the basic requirements of your vision?
 - a. Where can you get what you need? How long will that take? How are you praying about it?
2. What is the name of your tribe?
 - a. You need a group of people, a tribe, clan, or family of believers who will walk with you as you travel your entrepreneurial road. (BTW – that's what CCNI is all about.)
3. How well tuned is your Vision or Business Plan?
 - a. If your Business Plan or Vision has not been tuned, (coached to clarity), then get with a Christian Coach ASAP. (FYI – The CCNI Business Summit this coming June will have a webinar on this topic.)
4. What are your primary offerings, products, or services?
 - a. Far too many new ventures tend to be generic. But people don't buy generic... they want to know exactly what they will get from your products or services.
5. What is your Marketing Plan for your services and products?
 - a. While that should be part of your Business Plan, your Marketing Plan is of singular importance and a priority once you're clear on what you offer.
6. Who are your clients?
 - a. It may sound simple, but it really isn't. The greater your clarity on who your clients are, the better will be your Marketing Plan.
7. How much are you trying to get done? (How's your work-life-worship balance?)
 - a. As much as you may think that you're superman or wonder woman, you're not. It takes time to build a business and you can only do as much as you can do when you're doing it. Don't neglect home and worship.
8. How well do you listen, get coached, and take action?
 - a. The world is consistently changing. You should consistently measure your impact and be prepared to pivot to the changes that are happening around you?
9. What is your methodology for tracking your data?
 - a. No matter how small or large your business is, you need to track your data. If you're unsure of what data to collect, we'll cover that at the CCNI Business Summit too.
10. What is your market, niche, products, service, or outreach?
 - a. Get clear and specific on at least one thing before you decide to add something else.

When I was a schoolteacher, I'd ask my students to write a paper reflecting something they read, develop an idea, or compose a story. Far too often they would turn in a lackluster paper and then when I'd ask them to revise or rewrite their paper, they would groan and complain. Our culture has unfortunately created a “I want it now” or “I want it the first time” mentality. That is seldom how things are done. Where you are today in your journey for entrepreneurial success is only where you are today. Today is simply another day of *small beginnings* because you still need to

revise, revamp, adapt, pivot, and gain additional insights from the Holy Spirit to make your plan better and better.

Now, here are a few more factors to consider for your entrepreneurial journey. When I'm coaching people on their vision, I ask these questions because this is where they beat the odds. This is where God comes in. This is where the "odds are stacked in your favor."

- A. What does your prayer life around your vision or business look, sound, and feel like?
 - I've often said, if you're not praying daily, (minimally), for what you want, then you've set the wrong priorities.
- B. Who have you asked to pray with you for your vision or business?
 - Why wouldn't you ask others to pray for you and your plans? If your vision honors God, then there will be a blessing for others when they pray for you.
- C. What changes do you need to make -or- who do you need to become to reach your vision?
 - Who you are today is not the person who can reach your vision. If it was, then it wouldn't be a vision. There is always room for you to grow – especially spiritually.
- D. What changes do you need others to make to support your vision?
 - There may be physical changes you need to ask others to make on your behalf. After all, the people who love you, want your success.
- E. What does "Trusting God" mean for you and your vision? (Proverbs 3:5-6)
 - Trust and faith are tied together. What does trusting him mean for your vision or venture?
- F. How will God be glorified by your vision and entrepreneurial adventure?
 - A godly vision will always bring glory to God. Do a "check-up from the neck-up" around who will get the glory when your vision or new venture becomes a reality.

Do not despise these small beginnings. It really doesn't matter what levels of success or failure you are having today. Tomorrow is another day of *small beginnings*. What matters is that the *Lord rejoices to see the work begin*. With God, all things are possible. (Matthew 19:26b) So, enjoy your journey. After all, it's YOUR journey and well worth it from a spiritual perspective. Trust God for his help with all of your *small beginnings* because with his help, together you can build them to a magnificent ending.